AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

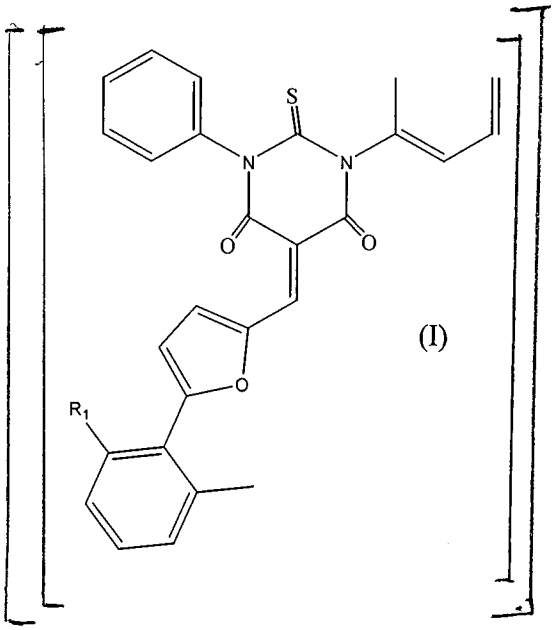
What is claimed is:

1–19. (Canceled)

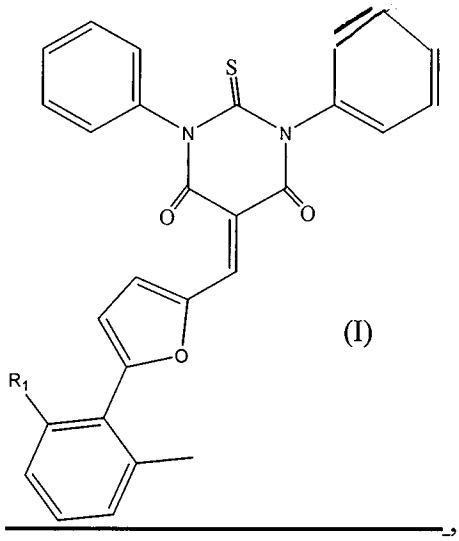
20. (Currently amended) A method of inhibiting Omi/HtrA2 activity, comprising:

contacting a cell having Omi/HtrA2 activity with an apoptosis inhibiting compound; and

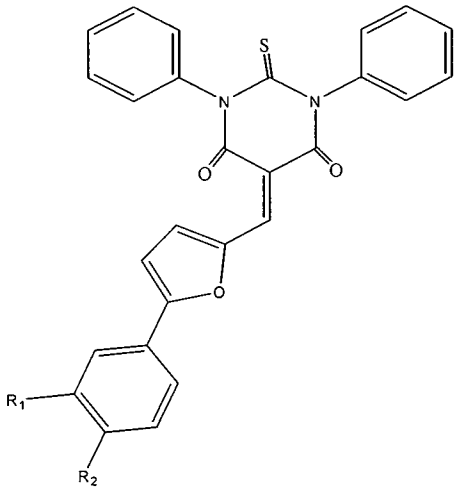
monitoring the inhibition of Omi/HtrA2 activity, wherein the apoptosis inhibiting compound is selected from the group consisting of :



(I)

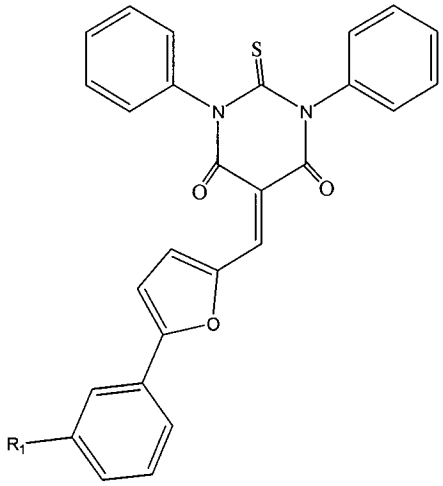


(I)



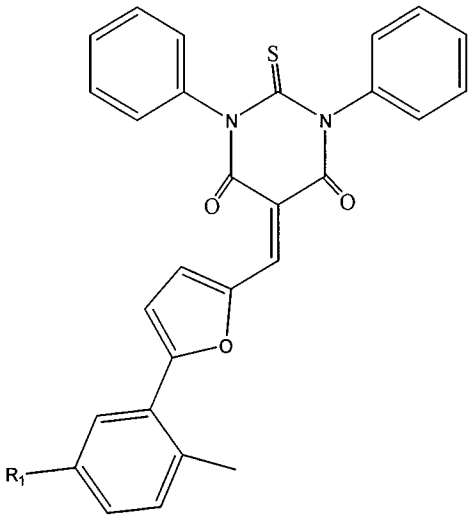
(II)

,



(III)

, and



(IV)

where R_1 is selected from the group consisting of a nitro group, a carboxy group, a hydroxide, an aliphatic group, an aromatic group, an acyl group, an alkoxy group, an alkylene group, an alkenylene group, an alkynylene group, a hydroxycarbonylalkyl group, an anhydride, an amide, an amine, and a heterocyclic aromatic group, and where R_2 is a methoxy group.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of contacting the cell comprises contacting the cell *in vivo*.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of contacting the cell comprises contacting the cell *in vitro*.

23. (Cancelled).

24. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the apoptosis inhibiting compound is Ucf-101.

25. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the apoptosis inhibiting compound is Ucf-102.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the apoptosis inhibiting compound is Ucf-103.

27. (Currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the apoptosis inhibiting compound is Ucf-104.

28. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of monitoring Omi/HtrA2 activity comprises monitoring a change in fluorescene of an Omi/HtrA2 substrate coupled to a fluorescent marker.

29. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of monitoring the inhibition of Omi/HtrA2 activity further comprises monitoring apoptosis of the cell.

30– 53. (Cancelled)

54. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein the fluorescent marker is selected from the group consisting of fluorescein isothiocyanate (FITC), cyanine dye-5 (CY5), cyanine dye-3 (Cy3), cyanine dye-7 (Cy7), allophycocyanin (APC), tetramethyl rhodamine isothiocyanate (TRITC), and phycoerythrin (PE).

55. (New) A method of inhibiting Omi/HtrA2 activity, comprising:

contacting a cell having Omi/HtrA2 activity with an apoptosis inhibiting compound; and

monitoring the inhibition of Omi/HtrA2 activity,

wherein the apoptosis inhibiting compound is selected from the group consisting of Ucf-101 Ucf-102, Ucf-103 and Ucf-104.

56. (New) A method for inhibiting caspase-independent apoptosis in a cell comprising:

contacting a cell having Omi/HtrA2 activity with at least one apoptosis inhibiting compound selected from the group consisting of Ucf-101 Ucf-102, Ucf-103 and Ucf-104, such that the apoptosis inhibiting compound interacts with Omi/HtrA2 to inhibit the activity of Omi/HtrA2, wherein the inhibition of Omi/HtrA2 activity reduces apoptosis in the cell; and monitoring the inhibition of apoptosis.